

God's Way, God's Time, God's Glory - Acts 16:11-15 – July 6th, 2008

- We now re-join Paul on this his second missionary journey. After splitting up with Barnabas in Antioch, he took Silas with him instead.
- While in Lystra, Paul meets a young man named Timothy. He brings him along as well after circumcising him for the sake of the Jews.
- Then, while in Troas, he meets Luke, who is a physician, and has him, join the mission's team as they leave Asia Minor for Europe.

- I suppose you could say that we've got a "dream-team" of sorts with the Apostle Paul, Silas, Timothy, and now Dr. Luke.
- You would think that God would already have the coliseum's set up and the promotional campaign in place for a massive crusade.
- That may be the way we would do it, but our way of doing it is not God's way of doing it. God does it His way, in His time, for His glory.

1. God may have me just wait (Verse 11-12)

11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

v11 After having a vision in Troas of a Macedonian man begging them to come and help, they leave the next day for Macedonia.

v12 Instead of hurrying up so they can hit the ground running because of the urgency of the need, they arrive and just wait several days.

2. God may have me start small (Verse 13)

13 On the Sabbath **we went outside the city** gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. **We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.**

v13 Instead of going inside the synagogue, as Paul usually did, they go outside the city by the river to an obscure prayer meeting.

- Instead of speaking to a large crowd of men, they end up speaking to a small group of women, which to a Jew is considered nothing.
- What's interesting about this is that Paul had a vision in Troas of a man begging him to come to Macedonia, not a woman.

"Paul knew that all Pharisees prayed daily, saying, 'God, I thank Thee I am not a Gentile, nor a slave, nor a woman!'"
Ivor Powell "The Amazing Acts" p277

"Had there been ten Jewish men, they would have sufficed to constitute a synagogue. No number of women would compensate for the absence of even one man necessary to make up the quorum of ten."

F.F. Bruce

"It is well worthy of note that the first gospel address delivered in Europe, was heard at a [small women's] prayer meeting. We ought therefore to prize this institution very highly."

Charles Spurgeon

Zechariah 4:10a For who hath despised the day of small things? KJV

3. God may have me see the impossible (Verse 14)

14 One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, **who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.**

v14 The name of one of the women was Lydia, from Thyatira, who dealt in purple dye. The Lord opened her heart to the message.

- The Lord wants us to know three specific details about Lydia. 1. She's a woman, 2. She's wealthy, and 3. She's a worshiper, "3 Strikes!"
- The city of Thyatira was known for their purple dye, and those who dealt in it were usually wealthy because it was so expensive.

Luke 18:18-27 Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but one, that is, God. 20 You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" 21 And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." 22 So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 23 But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. 24 And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 26 And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?" 27 But He said, **"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."** NKJV

- Ok, so she's a woman, she's wealthy, but she's already a worshiper. Sounds like the rich young ruler. He was religious too!
- The hardest people to reach are the ones who think they're already saved because they consider themselves to be a good person.
- The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. God may need us to stay out of His way so He can do the impossible.

4. God may have me providentially positioned (Verse 15)

15 When **she and the members of her household were baptized**, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

v15 She and those in her household believed and were baptized, and persuaded Paul and his team to stay at her house.

- What would have happened if Paul hadn't come to Macedonia, waited several days, then went to this women's prayer meeting?
- Perhaps God providentially positioned Paul on this mission's trip to meet Lydia who was in town on this business trip, at that exact time.

“The apostle did not bring crowds to Jesus on this occasion, yet was he amply repaid by the conversion of this one woman, whom providence had brought their in the course of her business, on a purpose that she might be saved. Observe that it was not Paul who converted her, but the Lord himself. Paul would have knocked at the door of her heart in vain, if he who has the key of all hearts had not opened it. Lord, open all our hearts to give attention to thy word.”

Charles Spurgeon

John 6:44a "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, NIV

1 Corinthians 3:6-7 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but **God who gives the increase**. NIV